

The Farmer's Share:

“The farm-value of food purchases at grocery stores, the proportion of a retail price that farmers receive, decreased from 30% in 1990 to 27% in 1991, the most recent year for the statistics. Yet, in spite of lower farm prices and the downturn in the economy, retail food prices increased by 2.9%” - *USDA Office of Public Affairs, 1994*

Farmers' Markets . . .

- *Self-Organized* - Markets generally require little or no subsidy of outside staff or money to start up or maintain their operation.
- *Entry Level Opportunities* - It is easy for start-up gardeners and small farmers to begin marketing their produce without a large threshold of investment in production or marketing.
- *Direct Marketing* - Farmers sell their own products which means more of the consumer's food dollar stays in the area.
- *Attract Customers* - The shopping public is attracted to a farmers' market, and nearby businesses benefit from the increase in shoppers who might otherwise not come to the market's area.
- *Develop Skills* - Ordinary people have a low-risk opportunity to develop their production and marketing skills commensurate with their abilities and desires in a self-defined and self-regulated program. This occurs both in their own operation and while co-operating with other growers to decide the overall business strategy of their market.
- *Provide a Connection to Maine* - Visitors to Maine, whether for the summer or just passing through, stop at a farmers' market to get a “taste of Maine”, to try the locally grown seasonal specials such as beet greens, fiddleheads and buttercup squash, or to marvel that, yes, Maine can grow peaches and melons. And Mainers who grew up on a farm are furnished with a connection to their roots by regularly visiting their local farmers' market.
- *Support the Maine Agricultural Community* - Many of the customers at a farmers' market will tell you that they shop at the market in part because they see this as an act that directly supports farmers with 100% of the food dollars they spend at market. If you want to support farming in Maine and the culture of open spaces that farming provides, what better way than to go directly to the farmers to make your purchases.
- *Offer Fresh, High Quality Produce* - Citizens appreciate farmers driving from their farms right in to the town square or city parking lot with produce freshly picked only a few hours ago. The healthy fruits and vegetables can't be beat for quality and good flavor, short of growing your own.

Farmers' Markets . . .

- ... good for Farmers.
- ... good for the Public.
- ... good for Maine.

Brought to you by
Maine's 94 Farmers' Markets
and the



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